

REMARKS

The present application was filed on November 12, 2003 with claims 1-23. In the outstanding Office Action dated October 31, 2006, the Examiner has: (i) required the Applicant to elect one of two Species, I and II, which are directed to claims 1-12 and 13-23, respectively; (ii) objected to the drawings as failing to show "compressible padding," "hook and loop fastener," and "joint (130)"; (iii) required revision of the abstract; (iv) objected to a hyperlink and a term in the disclosure and required correction of these items; (v) rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,340,630 to Maddox (hereinafter "Maddox"); (vi) rejected claims 1-3 and 6-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 1,643,850 to Jones (hereinafter "Jones"); and (vii) rejected claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones in view of Maddox.

Response to Restriction Requirement

In response to the restriction requirement in the office action dated October 31, 2006, I provisionally elect to prosecute the invention of Species II, directed at claims 13-23, with traverse. Claims 13-23 should not be withdrawn from consideration, and, if considered withdrawn at this time, I request that they be reinstated. Claims 1-12 should be withdrawn from consideration while I am prosecuting claims 13-23. After my telephone conversation with the examiner on October 25, 2006, I received the office action and reconsidered which claims I wanted to elect to prosecute.

I wish to thank Examiner Jackson for his telephone call of October 25, 2006 and for explaining the need for a restriction requirement. At the time I had not seen the office action and did not fully appreciate the difference between the two Species in relation to the objections the Examiner had with them, the drawings and the claims. Now that I have seen the detailed office action I am not affirming the election of Species I but instead am electing to prosecute the invention of Species II, claims 13-23.

In the Drawings

The objections to the drawings, which are objected to as failing to show "compressible padding," "hook and loop fastener," and "joint (130)", are now moot. The "compressible padding" and "hook and loop fastener" features have been canceled as a result of the withdrawal of the Species I claims and the deletion of claim 18. The objection to "joint (130)" is also moot because the joint feature as claimed in the elected claims of Species II is not required to be "lockable" as is the joint as claimed in the non-elected Species I claims. Elected claims 13-23 are directed to a joint, description of which can be found in the specification at page 3, line 31 to page 4, line 1; page 6, lines 1-3; and page 7, line 26 to page 8, line 7. Accordingly, I respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the drawings.

In the Specification

Regarding the objections to the Abstract of the Disclosure, I have re-written the Abstract, by deleting words and phrases that made the original Abstract too long, and by copying into the Abstract a sentence from the Summary of the Invention at page 3, lines 24-26. No new matter has been added.

Regarding the objection to the disclosure because it contained an embedded hyperlink on page 5, I have removed the hyperlink. In the event it is useful to provide the street address of the Bulgarian Academy of Science where the reference was published, it is: Acad.G.Bonchev str., Bl.105, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria.

Regarding the objection to the phrase "et seq." on page 6, lines 29-30, I have deleted this phrase.

Accordingly, I respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the abstract and specification. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the present Amendment.

Remarks to Claim Rejections

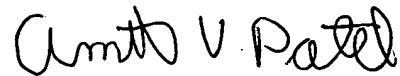
The rejections of claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Maddox are moot because of the election of the Species II claims, and because I am removing claims 1-12 from consideration.

The rejections of claims 1-3 and 6-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Jones are also moot because of the election of the Species II claims, and because I am removing claims 1-12 from consideration.

The rejections of claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones in view of Maddox are moot because of the election of the Species II claims, and because I am removing claims 1-12 from consideration.

In view of the above, I believe that the present application, including claims 13- 17 and 19-23, is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: Friday, January 26, 2007